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GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
SAN JUAN

ADDRESS ALL OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION SAN JUAN, P. R.

July 9, 1942

Circular Letter No. 14

To: All Supervisory Officials and Teachers of Physical Education

Re: PROGRAM OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR 1942-43

Ladies and Gentlemen:

INTRODUCTION

The narrow view of education as academic learning still prevails in the minds of the general public. But in the minds of most educators today, physical education is recognized as an essential of education. The physical education program must be given recognition equal to that given to other subjects in the curriculum. All instructional periods must be utilized for the teaching of skills, techniques, and understandings; they must not be used as periods for free, undirected play or for the teaching of other subjects.

Ample opportunity must be provided for all children to participate in games and sports under normal conditions of play, in order that permanent interests of a recreational character may be established.

POLICY

The policy in the development of a physical education program in the public schools must be one in which the right of the majority of pupils to participate in some form of physical education or recreational activity must be safeguarded. A program for large groups certainly must be given precedence over one for a selected few.

The athletic program in the schools must be amateur competition in fact and in spirit. Pupils should consider participation as recreation and should play for the joy of the game rather than because the school, principal, or coach wants a winning team.

The teacher of physical education should consider it important that pupils develop interest in a variety of activities, so as to prevent undue absorption in any particular one.

A well-balanced program of physical education will first provide an extensive, varied program of intramural sports. The intramural program will be supplemented with an interscholastic program in the junior and senior high schools.

Interscholastic athletics are not recommended for the first six grades. At this level most boys are growing rapidly and are insufficiently developed to withstand the physical and emotional strain of interscholastic competition. Their needs can best be met by a varied program of intramural activities.

Athletic programs for girls on all levels should be limited to intramural, sports day, and club programs, where mass participation is emphasized. Girls' athletics must not be handled on the same basis as boys' athletics. Games that have different rules for boys and girls must be played by boys according to boys' rules, and by girls according to girls' rules. This is very important. The program for girls must be adjusted in accordance with the girls' own physical differences.

The health and welfare of the children must be of first consideration in planning an interschool athletic program. The protection of pupils' health requires measures to prevent excessive strain or exhaustion from unlimited amount of activity and from activities inappropriate for the children's age. This is particularly true in the case of the rapidly growing adolescent or preadolescent pupil. While vigorous activity is stimulating to normal, healthy persons, excess may result in exhaustion and chronic fatigue. There are many necessary measures for safeguarding the health of pupils participating in physical education activities. Some are the responsibility of the medical adviser; others the responsibility of the teacher of physical education; and still others are administrative in nature. Pupils participating in strenuous athletics, whether in class programs, or in interscholastic or intramural activities, should have the protection afforded by a medical examination. Close cooperation between the medical advisers and the teachers of physical education is needed in developing

plans for protecting the health of participants in athletics.

The exploitation of athletic competition in the schools for commercial and publicity purposes is to be condemned. Commercialized sports contests are conducted for purposes other than the best interest of each individual boy and girl and frequently result in overemphasis on winning, detrimental health conditions, and undesirable social outcomes.

As part of the physical education program, interscholastic athletics must be directly administered by school authorities. There is no place for control by outside agencies.

We urge and recommend the cooperation of the teachers of physical education with all local and insular athletic associations, provided this cooperation will not interfere with the work of the teachers in the school physical education program. Under no circumstances should teachers of physical education absent themselves from their duties for the purpose of assisting at or working in connection with any outside activity. The only authorization for such action would be permission granted by the Commissioner of Education.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Three types of programs in physical education must be developed throughout the school system during the year:

Elementary Urban Schools

1. The regular physical education period from the first to the sixth grades must be twenty minutes long three times per week.

Elementary Rural Schools

From the first to the third grades, with double enrollment, the period must be fifteen minutes long three times per week; from the fourth to the sixth grades, with single enrollment, the period must be twenty minutes long three times a week.

2. The intramural program, which is to be sponsored

for all the pupils within the school, is to be conducted outside of the regular physical education classes on all levels.

Intramural sports and athletics constitute an extremely important part of physical education. It is this part of the program which gives pupils an opportunity to put into use the skills learned in class. It is a program for all pupils, regardless of size and proficiency. Among activities included in intramural programs are horseshoes, archery, basketball, baseball, softball, track and field, volleyball, table tennis, and other sports and games.

3. The interscholastic program must be given for boys only in the junior and senior high schools with the object of promoting interest in school athletics, better acquaintance, and friendship among school children. The interscholastic program is an integral part of the physical education program and contributes directly to educational objectives. In addition to its value for individual participants, interschool competition is useful in developing desirable school morale.

PROGRAM IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

The physical education activities in the elementary schools should be varied in nature, and should include games of simple organization, singing games, folk dancing, rhythms, story plays and mimetics. The fundamentals of volleyball, basketball, baseball, softball, and track and field should also be taught. A sound pedagogical procedure is to teach games that lead up to these sports. The class program in physical education is required of all pupils.

PROGRAM IN THE JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

The physical education program in the junior and senior high schools must consist largely of sports. Team sports should be stressed for their developmental value and dual sports for both their developmental and their carry-over values.

The program in the junior high school is obligatory, and class periods must be assigned just as is done with the other subjects of the curriculum. The class program in physical education is required of all pupils.

Wherever credit is given in high schools for physical education I, II or III, the amount of time allotted to it must be equal to that allotted to any academic subject. Physical education in the high schools must be offered in daily class periods and in after-school activities. The intramural and interscholastic competition compose the after-school program. Virtually all intramural activities should be carried over from the daily class periods. Although interscholastic athletics are considered important, they must not be stressed to the exclusion of other desirable physical education activities.

Where no credit is given for physical education in the high school, participation in the intramural and interscholastic programs is optional.

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC LEAGUES

Due to the shortage of vital materials, the five sectional High School Athletic Leagues will be discontinued for the duration of the war. To offset this, intramural competition should be intensified considerably.

FIELD DAYS

Field days have proved a valuable type of recreative competition. They follow extensive intramural programs, offer opportunities for the less skillful, and emphasize social as well as physical values.

CALENDAR OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

The following seasonal programs of physical activities have been included in this year's work for all schools. The purpose of this calendar is to coordinate physical education throughout the school system. This calendar is to be strictly followed.

As may be seen on the following chart, volleyball, basketball and baseball will be played for four months; track and field activities for three months; other recreational activities listed will be carried on throughout the whole school year. Shaded sections represent the approved season for each sport.

Chart

School Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Date	Aug. 3 to	Aug.31 to	Sep.28 to	Oct.26 to	Nov.23 to	Jan. 4 to	Feb.1 to	Mar.1 to	Mar.29 to	May 3 to
Activities	Aug.28	Sep.25	Oct.23	Nov.20	Dec.18	Jan.29	Feb.26	Mar.26	Apr.30	May 28
Volleyball	▨	▨	▨	▨						
Basketball (Free Throw)			▨							
Basketball				▨	▨	▨				
Baseball					▨	▨	▨	▨		
Track & Field								▨	▨	▨
Softball	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨
Table Tennis	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨
Horseshoes	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨
Archery for Girls Only	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨
Games of Simple Organization, Singing Games, Folk Dancing, Story Plays, Mimetics	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨
Field Days								▨	▨	▨

The first two months of each volleyball, basketball, baseball, and track season will be devoted to conditioning and training; the remainder to competition. It is impossible to avoid overlapping, if these seasons are to be long enough to be of benefit to the participants.

These seasons have been designated in coordination with other amateur athletic organizations on the Island. Thus, all amateur athletes, both in and out of school, will be carrying on the same activities at the same time.

Every teacher of physical education must prepare a program of physical education on a monthly basis and follow it as closely as possible. A copy of this program must be sent to the Commissioner of Education.

School officials should proceed in accordance with the suggestions herein given.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) H. A. MARTIN
Acting Commissioner of Education

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